

**SIGAR**Office of the Special Inspector General  
for Afghanistan Reconstruction

## Lessons Learned Record of Interview

<b>Project Name:</b>					
LL01 Strategy and Planning					
<b>Interview Code:</b>					
LL-01- [REDACTED]					
<b>Date/Time:</b>					
February 27, 2015; 9:00am-10:00am					
<b>Location:</b>					
Washington, DC					
<b>Purpose:</b>					
To gain perspective on NSC strategy and planning processes on Afghanistan					
<b>Present</b>					
Candace Rondeaux					
<b>SIGAR Attendees:</b>					
N/A					
<b>Non- attribution Basis:</b>	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	No	<input type="checkbox"/>	
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<b>Prepared By: (Name, title and date)</b>					
Candace Rondeaux					
<b>Reviewed By: (Name, title and date)</b>					
N/A					
<b>Key Topics:</b>					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>NSC South Asia Office</li> <li>South Asia Office split</li> <li>[REDACTED] Review</li> </ul>					

### NSC South Asia Office

Originally, under Bush the NSC carved out a South Asia directorate that included Afghanistan, Pakistan, India and the other smaller states. In 2008 there was a decision to take India out of the South Asia bureau and to treat Afghanistan and Pakistan separately. It was like a donut hole in the middle of the whole policy for South Asia bureau and to treat Afghanistan and Pakistan separately. It was like a donut hole in the middle of the whole policy for South Asia.



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(b)(5)

If there's transparency then how you organize the offices (of the NSC) is not maybe so consequential. But there wasn't a lot of transparency. The fact of the cleavage in the South Asia itself led to a breakdown in transparency. The Obama White House stovepiped everything.

### **South Asia office split**

It created friction. It created dysfunction and it created bad policy. You need to look at the region as a whole.

(b)(5)

(b)(3), (b)(5), (b)(7)(C)

(b)(5)

There was a lot of animosity between Obama staffers and veterans at the State Department. Frictions over the 2008 campaign continued to resonate. The disdain with which Obama staffers



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treated the State staffers was just unprofessional. Everyone went out of their way to cut each other out of meetings on both sides. They ran the White House like a Senate office and what that meant in practical terms was that decisions were made very slowly. It would take weeks to get a decision on things.



### Review

It did not have many references to the resource issue. It was very focused on policy and strategy objectives. There was no resource discussion. But the fall 2009 review did involve a discussion on resources. They debated troop levels, development assistance, the civilian surge. Then there was the Kerry-Lugar-Berman bill in the fall of 2009, which also raised the issue of Pakistan. The Obama administration just thought if you just hang in there Pakistan will see the light.